

REMARKS

The indication of allowance of claims 3, 6-35, 37 and 38 is acknowledged and appreciated. In view of the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Mizuno et al. '323 ("Mizuno"). Claim 1 is independent. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites in pertinent part, "first and second circuit blocks ...; and a timing adjustment circuit block provided ... *between* the first and second circuit blocks, *for adjusting a propagation timing of a transmission signal flowing on a line connecting the first and second circuit blocks to each other*" (emphasis added). The Examiner relies on macros 110a and 110b shown in Figs. 3-9 of Mizuno as the claimed first and second circuit blocks and phase adjusters 111a and 111b as the claimed timing adjustment circuit block. However, the alleged timing adjustment circuit block 111a and 111b of Mizuno merely functions to adjust the phases of clocks, each of which being respectively provided for the macros 110a and 110b from a clock buffer 103.

The alleged timing adjustment circuit block 111a, 111b of Mizuno does not adjust timing of any signal flowing on a line connecting the alleged first and second circuit blocks to each other. Indeed, the phase adjusters 111a, 111b of Mizuno are arranged for each macro 110a, 110b, respectively, rather than operationally or functionally between the alleged circuit blocks. In this regard, the adjusted clock phases of Mizuno *for each macro*, as would be understood in the art, do not correspond to the claimed transmission signal flowing *on a line connecting the first and second circuit blocks to each other*. Accordingly, Mizuno does not disclose or suggest, *inter*

alia, a timing adjustment circuit block provided ... *between* the first and second circuit blocks, *for adjusting a propagation timing of a transmission signal flowing on a line connecting the first and second circuit blocks to each other.*

As anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102 requires that each and every element of the claim be disclosed, either expressly or inherently (noting that "inherency may not be established by probabilities or possibilities", *Scaltech Inc. v. Retec/Tetra*, 178 F.3d 1378 (Fed. Cir. 1999)), in a single prior art reference, *Akzo N.V. v. U.S. Int'l Trade Commission*, 808 F.2d 1471 (Fed. Cir. 1986), based on the forgoing, it is submitted that Mizuno does not anticipate claim 1, nor any claim dependent thereon.

Under Federal Circuit guidelines, a dependent claim is nonobvious if the independent claim upon which it depends is allowable because all the limitations of the independent claim are contained in the dependent claims, *Hartness International Inc. v. Simplimatic Engineering Co.*, 819 F.2d at 1100, 1108 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Accordingly, as claim 1 is patentable for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims dependent thereon are also patentable. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are patentable based on their own merits by adding novel and non-obvious features to the combination.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If

Application No.: 10/773,315

there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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